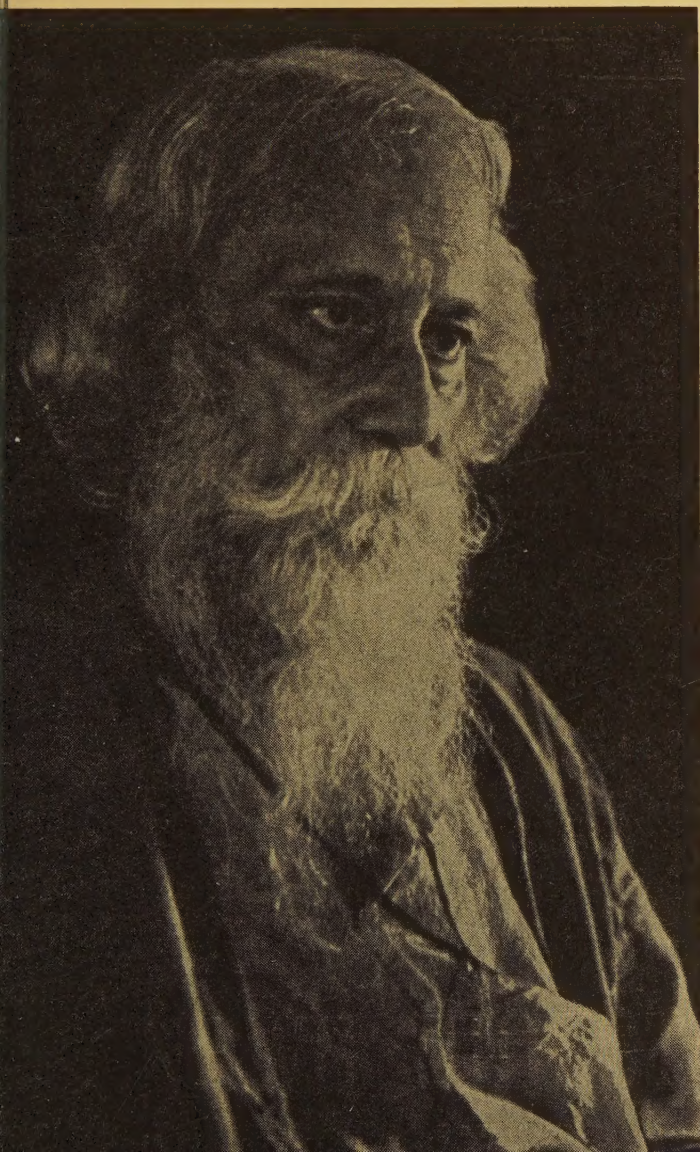


NEWS DIGEST

OF THE I.A.R.F.



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The picture on the cover: Rabindranath Tagore

ADDRESS OF THE SECRETARIAT:

40 Laan Copes van Cattenburch / The Hague / Netherlands

OUR DAVOS CONGRESS

We hope that this issue of our „Digest” will be out just before our Congress. It seems appropriate to devote some thoughts to the expectations which we cherish in connection with this meeting. We organize a Congress every three years and each of them marks more or less a milestone in the development of our organization.

We may say that our world is wrestling in this period after the second world war with some important problems, which also have an influence on our movement, as they have on the whole of religious life the world over. There is first of all the diminishing European influence in the world and the growing influence — also in the realm of the spirit — of America and Russia. As far as our movement is concerned — and here again this holds true for the whole of Christianity — Europe has to digest this fact. This challenged us to realize, that it must not react negatively to other people, who say the same things, which have been said many times before, and perhaps even better.

Provincialism is one of the great dangers of modern Europe. It can only make a contribution to the future if it sees clearly how the realistic situation is in our "one world".

Secondly: it must be noticed, that in our modern world-wide technical society with its great mobility, religion is at the same time both losing and gaining influence. Russia and the United States are here our signposts. Religion is losing ground in the whirlpool of modern secularisation, and at the same time it is showing a new vitality in the face of the great needs of people the world over. Liberalism as a part of the spiritual scene of our days makes no exception to this.

Thirdly: in the rapidly growing world-unity a massive encounter of the world-religions is approaching. How will this encounter influence the development of our modern society? Will religions be barriers to a better understanding as they often have been, or will they be bridges, as every faith has as its ideal?

The fourth problem to which we must point is the fact, that Modernism, which played a great part in the whole of the liberal-religious movement, is bearing fruit on the one hand in the great

Christian Churches of to-day. The ecumenical movement, the progressive, political spirit, the freedom of research in the field of the Bible, the development of new and open Christian ethos, which are all of them so apparent in the present-day pattern of religious life, are unthinkable without the influence of the Modernist Movement. But on the other hand, we are witnessing the fact, that liberalism as an idea or as a movement is looked upon with misgivings and that the relations of our body to the World Council of Churches remain for many of us "a thorn in the flesh". The Congress, which will meet in Davos, is therefore confronted on all sides by many problems at the same time. We are facing a situation in these post-war years, which cannot be conquered with the old concepts. We must go on without exactly knowing where we will land. And as far as we can be sure, we know one thing: we will only make progress, if we have the courage to make experiments. The thing we want most in the present, is the experimental mood. In my opinion our Davos-Congress is such an experiment. After our Chicago meeting of 1958 with the theme "The world-religions can meet the world's needs to-day" we saw more clearly than before, that the place of religion in the growing world-unity, was one of the most important aspects of religious life at the present time, and we faced the question: what can the liberal movement, as it is incorporated in our organization, in our body, contribute in this field?

We realize, that our movement has an age-old tradition of what people nowadays call the ecumenical spirit: the Arminius-commemorations have made us vividly aware of this. We see also, that out of this spirit an inclusiveness and tolerance, in one word liberalism towards other religions has been apparent in our movement for many years. Thinking along this line we must say, that we are taking up here one of the great dreams of our former leaders and that it is time, that we should do so. Especially so, because the traditional Christian Churches, although they too are, in many instances, heavily influenced by the XXth century situation, have not grown into an adequate attitude towards these problems. We cannot expect, that the ecumenical meetings in India at the end of this year will bring about a more realistic and liberal attitude in this field. On the other hand we are severely handicapped by the fact, that we have not enough experts with a thorough experience of the present day situation outside Europe, and that we, as a body, represent only a small minority in the spiritual and social turmoil of to-day. Although we are completely aware of the necessity of discussions like those which we will have in Davos, we realize that the contribution which we can make is modest. However, this will

not prevent us — I am sure — from having adventurous and even thrilling days and having a Congress which will certainly answer eagerly and actively the challenge which is put before it.

My expectations of the meetings are twofold. I hope that it will set an example which will be followed in other parts of the world and by other organizations. And I hope that it will put before our churches and groups the world over, what can be done, and what must be done, in this all important field, thus in this way, revitalizing our movement.

Prof. Dr. A. A. Bake, London, England.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Reawakening India has not produced a more typical renaissance personality than Rabindranath Tagore. The impact of Western civilisation had made itself felt ever more intensively from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards, with the consequence that, by the time of his birth, in 1861, the indigeous structure of society was being shaken to its very foundations, both by the enthousiastic acceptance and by the vigorous rejection of Western values by different sections of the community, or even by members of the same group or family. Dormant potencies were waking up, latent powers were becoming active with surprising results in the most varied fields.

Rabindranath was born in a family which had been in the centre of things for many generations. He counted many literary figures among his ancestors from the mediaeval author Bhatta Narayana onwards, and also many administrators, already under the Moslim rulers of Bengal who preceded the British. Contact and co-operation with the British administration — initially the East India Company, of course — dated from well over a hundred years before Rabindranath's birth and his grandfather, Dwarkanath, was the first Indian to become an equal partner in a large English business house (Carr, Tagore & Co.) and consequently had ample opportunities to appraise and value the contributions European culture offered to the culture of India. He was deeply influenced by them — 'though he did not

accept them uncritically by any means — and his fight for social reforms, often in co-operation with his intimate friend Rajam Mohan Roy, e.g. for the abolishing of cremation of widows, would have been unthinkable without this Western impact. That Dwarkanath appreciated his own Hindu background is clear from the fact that he was one of the founders of the Hindu College. On the other hand, however, he was anxious that the best of the West should benefit his own countrymen. This can be seen from the important part he played in the foundation of the Calcutta Medical College, which went to such lengths, that, when it became apparent that Hindu students had great objections to the dissection necessary in the anatomy classes, Dwarkanath forced himself to attend these classes regularly and so set the example. It was he who enabled the first four promising medical students to complete their studies in England. He firmly opposed the demands of Hindu orthodoxy by refusing to undergo purification ceremonies after this first visit to England in the early eighteenthies, a visit by the way, during which he had an audience with the Pope, and had been received by the King and Queen of Naples, the King of France and Queen Victoria.

In religious matters his support for Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj and his friendship with the missionaries of the Christian Unitarian Church were of great importance in his life.

In all these ways he established a tradition of liberalism and broad-mindedness which the succeeding generations of his family upheld and intensified.

The role of Rabindranath's father, Devendranath, as Raja Ram Mohan Roy's successor in the Brahmo Samaj and Rabindranath's lifelong ties with this movement are too well known to need further mention. It is true that, when Rabindranath grew up, the character of the Brahmo Samaj had changed a great deal since its early days and that, in the course of time and mostly under Devendranath's influence, the accent had shifted most significantly away from the earlier Western Unitarian ideas to the religious concepts as expressed in the Indian Upanishads, the same concepts that moulded Tagore's religious thinking from his early days, but the early friendship persisted. Rabindranath had not to put up a fight to acquire critical appreciation of Western things, he absorbed it as a matter of course in the atmosphere of his ancestral home. The way in which he worked it out was, of course, in accordance with his own genius.

There is no doubt, that his religious outlook was entirely determined by the Vedantic idea of the ultimate unity between Man and God and, by implication, the Universe, as this is an emanation from the same Primordial Principle. This basic conviction we find in innumerable lyrical poems which are really songs, words and melody

having been created simultaneously. The image of the diver "diving into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless" (Gitanjali No 100) perfectly expresses his deepest conviction and formulates the motive power of his life's work. This spiritual approach is expressed in ever varying, striking and deeply moving images, sometimes taken from nature, but often from daily life.

His intense love and acceptance of life in all its aspects speaks from his prosewritings as well, from his detailed observation of the actions of human beings as they are, in all strata of life, in joy and — more often — in misery and sorrow. He records the tragedies resulting from actions of which the actors themselves are hardly conscious, conditioned as they are by the laws and customs of the society in which they are born. This quality makes his short stories deeply moving.

His objective view of the happenings around him did not signify, however, that he did not participate. From his early manhood onwards he strove for the betterment of social conditions and here his appreciation of Western ideas acted very powerfully. As manager of the very extensive family-estates in middle and east Bengal, a post to which his father appointed him when he was about thirty, he really had an opportunity to get to know the life of the Bengali peasant. He noticed the abject poverty of the villagers and their apathy, but also their immense store of traditional wisdom and poetic beauty. As early as the closing years of the 19th century he started co-operative movements among his tenants, as he realised that each peasant in isolation was too poor to afford the necessary implements, but groups in combination could get together enough to buy the indispensable machines. He clearly saw the importance of machinery, but also the folly of supplying machines that the peasants could not use themselves (hence his never slackening fight for further education). According to him it was foolishness not to use modern mechanical means, because he felt that, at some time in history, the instruments now regarded as primitive, had been innovations just as startling as the threshing- and other machines were now. A man who refused to ride in a motorcar while consenting to use a bullock-cart was — as Tagore saw it — foolishly inconsistent, because the motorcar was only a logical further stage in the development of the locomotion principle. He constantly worked for two things, co-operation and intelligent acceptance of modern means of improved production in order to combat poverty. Acceptance of the fullness of life, rejection of the idea of asceticism and of the ideal of poverty are three very powerful factors in the social activities of Rabindranath and the creation of

his agricultural centre Sriniketan, some three miles from Santiniketan, was in the truest sense the culmination of a lifelong endeavour. It also embodied his ideal of co-operation. People from all over the world were to come, but only if they were prepared to co-operate on the basis of equality.

Undeniably these ideals were not always realised in practice. Human failings, parochial interests and personal jealousies often made a mockery of the poet's ideals, but that does not detract from the modernity, width and truth of his vision, certainly remarkable in the India of nearly three quarters of a century ago and requiring a great amount of personal courage.

Another driving force in Tagore's life was the overpowering urge for freedom. National freedom as such was not sufficient. Tagore sensed that exploitation and oppression were just as possible under the rule of one's own kind as under the rule of a foreign power. Still he recognised the intense irritation faults made by foreign rulers were bound to cause. An apt simile he used was that, when people were made to wear shoes, even a small pebble that got inside could cause acute discomfort. If they went barefoot in their own way, that same pebble would not even be noticed.

All through his long life he has expressed himself with great force on political matters, denouncing what he considered to be wrong, even if it meant impopularity. One such occasion was the address in Japan, shortly after the first world-war, forcefully denouncing militant nationalism. Still, politics were only one aspect of his conception of freedom, the ultimate aim of which he always saw as the breaking of the bonds that prevent our realisation of the ultimate unity. In daily life these bonds were represented by the shackles of outworn conventions against which he never ceased to fight whether in society (by the breaking of caste, e.g. by communal eating, arranging of inter-caste marriages, remarrying of widows, etc. etc.) in art or in education. His ultimate aim always was the development of the individual personality to its fullest extent.

It cannot be denied that this breaking of bonds had a very dangerous side for those who had not the necessary stamina and instinctive critical faculties. Still the ideals stand and are of immense value for the further development of India, now that it has been able to free itself from the bond the people gradually had begun to feel as intolerable. "Co-operation on the basis of equality by grown-up and responsible individuals" is the message of a great poet which can point the way to the immense variety of peoples of the Indian subcontinent and perhaps far outside those limits.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

Prayer

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow
domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truths;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought
and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

God with us

God with us is not a distant God; He belongs to our homes, as well
as to our temples. We feel His nearness to us all in all the human
relationships of love and affection, and in our festivities He is the
chief guest whom we honour. In seasons of flowers and fruits, in
the coming of the rain, in the fullness of the autumn, we see the
hem of His mantle and hear His footsteps. We worship Him in all
true objects of our worship and love Him wherever our love is true.

Spiritual unity

The true meaning of God has remained vague in our minds only
because our consciousness of the spiritual unity has been thwarted.
Time has come when we must, for the sake of that peace which is
the harvest of truth, refuse to allow the idea of God to remain
indistinct behind unrealities of formal rites and theological mis-
tiness.

Love

We have our greatest delight when we realize ourselves in others,
and this is the definition of love.

The criterion of Truth

Mere information about facts, mere discovery of power, belongs to
the outside and not to the inner soul of things. Gladness is the
one criterion of truth, and we know when we have touched Truth
by the music it gives, by the joy of greeting it sends forth to the
truth in us. That is the true foundation of all religions.

Rabindranath Tagore

(from the Indian Messenger)

THE UNITY OF MANKIND IN OUR DIVIDED WORLD

The world is divided. Is there any unity that underlies the division? What kind of unity should we seek?

In September of 1958 I gave an address before an interfaith group (Shintoist, Buddhist, Christian, humanist) in Tokyo. At the beginning of the discussion period immediately following the address a venerable Buddhist monk arose and made an impassioned comment concluding with the statement that the West would not have devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki by means of the atomic bomb had not the destroyers considered the Japanese to be a subhuman species. Another speaker suggested that the immense difference between East and West with respect to economic resources serves as a ground for envy on the part of the East. In another conference I addressed, this time in Burma, I was reminded of the fact that in the past two generations the West has started two world wars. In these three instances we find illustrations of the tensions that separate our divided world.

Considering the contributions to division which emanate in special ways from the West, the most fitting beginning for the Davos Congress might well be a confession of our own failings, a confession not only of our complicity in the divisions of our world, but also of our own lack of unity in the so-called Christian West, an expression, in short, of humility. This confession of humility may be especially needful in the light of the claims of superiority which traditionally have been made by Christians in face of other religions. We may say that in principle we are united by virtue of a common humanity. But this common humanity has not yet an actual means of effective expression. In face of the manifold forms of division, we must say that it is our ethnic, our political, our economic, our ethical *problems* that unite us, not any solutions which we possess. Our first task is to acquire the ability to seek new solutions. Our faith is that under God more light is yet to break forth.

But before we can find new solutions, a prior search must be to answer the questions, Who are "We", and who are "They"? We do not really know the answer to either of these questions. Nor can we answer the one question apart from the search for the answer to the other. The answer to the question as to who "we" are must be sought

not *in vacuo* but in dialogue with the others, in a dialogue where "we all" are talking with each other about "us". In short, we must learn to listen as well as to talk, to learn as well as to tell. This is dialogue in mutuality, the dialogue in which we can achieve new Ego Identity.

The dynamic historical situation in which we all now find ourselves demands this discovery of a new Ego Identity for all concerned. Both East and West, both the old world religions and the „archaic religions" (for example, in Africa), are now in new encounter under the imperative of achieving a unity whereby we all may peradventure survive. There is no likelihood of our severally achieving relevant new definitions of ourselves if we are not able to learn from each other and even to correct ourselves and each other. This does not mean that we are to strive for syncretism, but rather that we must be prepared in dialogue to go beyond our present fixation of self-definition. In such a dialogue characteristic features in each religious mentality, as conditioned by history and experience, will become clearer to all, and in mutuality these characteristic features may become more precious to all. We are not likely to achieve any unity that can deal with the economic, ethnic, and political divisions if we cannot be influenced by each other.

It is conceivable that for a long time to come real dialogue at the level of the profoundest religious presuppositions will not be possible. Here we may recall what has happened in the ecumenical conferences of the World Council of Churches. For years the representatives of various branches of Christianity came together in these conferences only to proclaim to the others their own respective confessions of faith. William Adams Brown used to say that in these conferences the Calvinists, the Lutherans, the Anglicans and so on, talked primarily over the shoulder for the constituency „back home", in order to be able to say on the return home: "You see, I told them where *we* stand". This self-enclosure of the delegates was overcome even in slight measure only when these theologians were diverted from the explicit theological discussion and were given the responsibility of achieving consensus regarding a practical problem — unemployment, poverty, disease. In this way essentially human qualities of brotherhood finally came to the fore. So it may have to be if we of the West are to achieve any significant unity with the East and with Africa. In the past, Protestantism has shown itself capable of learning even from secularism (Why not from other religions also?).

This consideration suggests a possible strategy. In each of the religions, our own included, there is much dry rot (what Emil Brunner calles "churchiness") and even superstition. Would it not further

mutual understanding and correction if in our dialogue with the other cultures and religions we should severally come to know and appreciate the prophets of the respective traditions? By sharing an appreciation of the most radical critics of our several religions, we might assist each other to bring out the best in each. When this point is reached, we shall be talking not about "we and they" but about us all. This is the kind of unity that might transcend and challenge our divided world.

Rev. J. W. Wery, Haarlem, Holland.

THE PROPOSED NEW BASIS OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN DISCUSSION

In this article I will try to give a survey of the reaction in liberal circles to the proposed change of the Basis of the World Council of Churches. Much has been written about this subject, but I was not able to read it all. The account of Dutch reactions, which I know best, is proportionally too elaborate. But I hope that this article will give an insight into the situation of liberalism in Europe and a stimulus to think over the relationship of W.C.C. and I.A.R.F.

History

When the member-churches of the World Council of Churches meet at the end of this year in New-Delhi, there will be an item on their agenda, which has aroused considerable discussion and a great amount of uneasiness in liberal circles. The Executive Committee proposes to change the basis of the WCC and recommends that the wording be altered to read:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The basis had been in discussion since the foundation of the WCC in 1948. The present basis, which reads:

The WCC is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

prevented the Unitarians and Universalists and some Quaker groups from partaking in the work of the WCC, while e.g. the Dutch Remonstrants and Mennonites raised objections, when they became members.

The First Assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948 decided, that any churches which desired a change in the Basis should present their wishes to the Central Committee. In 1951 a sub-commission was nominated to investigate the proposals, made by several churches. This sub-commission didn't find it desirable to change the Basis, but it made a draft-statement on the nature of the Basis. In this draft-statement it is said, that it is less than a confession. It is, however, much more than a formula of agreement. As Dr. Visser 't Hooft said in his report in St. Andrews 1960:

It would be a mistake to change the character of the Basis and to make it something else than what it is now, namely an identification of the nature of our fellowship and an orientation point for our common task: Its one and only purpose must be to say what holds us together in the World Council, what is the starting point of our conversation and the foundation of our collaboration.

Liberal reactions

As the cold wind from St. Andrews in Scotland penetrated to churches and liberal groups on the Continent and in America, it not only chilled the hearts of those, who had followed sympathetically and advanced actively the work of the WCC, but fanned also the smouldering difficulties, which the present basis already raised and which were not lessened by the new formula. On the Continent of Europe the proposed new basis evoked debates inside the great protestant national churches, in which the liberals are a minority, and brought latent tensions into the open. In all these reactions one thing was clear: no one was happy about the new Basis. The great stumbling-block: the Godhead of Jesus Christ was kept in the Basis, was even made more explicit through the doxology at the end of the new formula. If the churches met each other as *christian* churches, it was understandable, that they looked for a christological principle to express the character of their co-operation. But, as the Remonstrant Brotherhood had already written to the WCC in 1949:

The Basis is not an adequate expression of the concepts and convictions of several of the participating churches. This regards not only the so-called „liberal” churches. Large sections in the Anglo-saxon world, in-

cluding Australia, do not believe that Christ should be considered identical with God. The same holds true of large sections of the younger churches and also of some churches on the European Continent. In even larger sections of Christianity the identification is just passively "accepted" not actively "believed" in. Thus the Basis is both an over- and an understatement of the Christian Faith.

The most severe criticism came from the Editor of the liberal paper "Le Protestant de Genève", Robert Stahler, who wrote:

The Unitarians and the liberals do not believe the late Greek dogma of the ontological godhead of Jesus of Nazareth In conscience and according to the Bible, the liberals acknowledge and venerate in Jesus their Saviour, their Master, he, who leads them to God, because he is the way, the truth and the life, but they could not confess him as God in Person, without giving the impression of blaspheming.

The addition of the expression „according to the Scriptures" . . . is in our eyes a mistake and unjustifiable. The Scriptures do not treat Jesus as God; one has to twist the texts to pretend it.

The delegates of the Federation of protestant churches in Switzerland were charged in 1947 to ask for a change of the doctrinal base in a larger sense; it is with this reserve that the Swiss Churches have said yes to the WCC

The question that is now before us, is to know whether the Federation of Swiss Churches of Switzerland can remain a member of the WCC, unless at the expense of a monstrous hypocrisy and an inhuman coercion on a certain part of its adherents.

The Dutch Lutheran theologian Prof. Dr. C. W. Mönnich, a representative of Dutch rightwing modernism, concluded:

The expression "according to the Scriptures" is as vague and tasteless as it was in the fourth century: vague, because it has no real content, tasteless because it veils a piece of church politics with edification.

In the biggest protestant church in Holland, the Dutch Reformed Church, the new Basis was intensively discussed. Here Dr. A. de Wilde, a prominent liberal, wrote:

When Athanasius in the fourth century stands up, risking his own life for the homo-ousios (the Logos is of the one and the same essence as the Father), he stands up for the unity of God and he turns against a polytheism, which may have developed from the Arien standpoint The great objection against all theology, which doesn't limit the significance of the old dogma to save the unity of God in a historical situation, but continues to think over the three persons, is that such theology leads to three gods. The Islam is the grim and just rejection of this sort of Christianity

Another major criticism was raised by the change of the words:

"a fellowship of churches which accept" into "a fellowship of churches which confess".

Here many a liberal felt a dangerous tendency to confessionalism. To quote again Prof. Mönnich:

In practice it had become clear, that the basis-formula was not meant as a credal statement, and therefore it couldn't do much harm. But in this new extension the tone becomes false, the sober-pragmatic character is veiled with beautiful theological terms and therefore painfully made devotional.

Therefore a Mennonite publication stated:

Even when to confess is not meant as a credal statement, we must realise, that the church(es) as such have not one mouth, but that the *members* of the churches (congregations) profess witness.

In the discussions in the federations of protestant churches, as in Switzerland and France, this point was of course stressed again and again: the member-churches in the WCC could not confess more there, than they asked themselves from their members internally. A third consideration concerned the general trend of the development of the work of the WCC. Prof. Van Holk, former I.A.R.F.-secretary, pointed out the danger of repristination.

The issue is not for a small part, whether it is right in the 20th century, to found the ecumenical movement of Christianity on a doctrinal view, which in its content and method has been so radically rejected in the 19th century. In my opinion there is the danger that step by step to be a christian will be more and more understood as bound to the „classic“, that is to say orthodox, doctrine of the Trinity.

And Dr. Faber, the secretary of the I.A.R.F., wrote:

The proposed change is a symptom of the direction, which is more and more followed by the WCC, the direction of selfevident traditionalism. I ask myself, where may be the spiritual need, which now as in other times, in which the struggles compelled the church „to confess“, inevitably prompted this change. I see in Europe a church, which spiritually and practically lost more and more her grip and I ask whether the church wouldn't do more sensible to begin by standing on the other side than on that of confessionalism. I'm for many years now secretary of the I.A.R.F. I have always been convinced of the great value of the oecumenical movement for the future of christianity. I am now, however, more than ever convinced of the necessity of a good international liberal organisation, which can add its contribution: there are certain important problems, from which the WCC isolated itself more and more, and to which we have to apply ourselves.

The Basis and the World Council of Churches.

Unhappy as liberal christians were about the new proposed Basis, they generally didn't lack in positive appreciation of the work done

by the WCC. Work done by Inter Church Aid and Help to the refugees is an impressive contribution of the churches to the world's needs; the same applies to the Department of studies and the commission on international affairs. Also in the realm of re-evaluation of the position of the churches over and against each other there has been done important work. In all these fields many liberals had experienced that their contribution had been accepted and appreciated. Historically in Europe liberal christianity had always been at its best in the dialogue with the orthodoxy. Isolation had a stiffening effect. And undeniably the oecumenical movement had quickened theology and the spiritual life of the congregations. In view of all this, many liberals in the European churches doubted whether the questions raised about the Basis ought to be deemed of such importance, that the acceptance of the new Basis in New-Delhi should make it impossible to cooperate in future in the WCC. This view was clearly expressed by Prof. Van Holk in the General Assembly of the Remonstrant Brotherhood:

Although many in our group have objections against such a one-sided accent on the trinitarian formula, no one can deny, that the great majority of christianity deems its faith expressed in that formula and that therefore that formula cannot be called unchristian. As long as it is given to us to voice in this fellowship of churches our own conviction, and we often find to our amazement, how much attention there is given to this opinion, it would not be right to leave the WCC. No one can deny, that at this moment in the ecumenical Movement and in the World Council in an increasing measure there is a centre of activity for christianity. One can applaud it or deplore it, one cannot deny it. In the World Council christianity is placed in the world situation of this moment for acting together. Of course we have to witness our own convictions and to stand up for them, but we should place ourselves outside the given situation if we didn't think with, speak with, act with the Oecumene.

The destiny of the new Basis is not yet sure. There are rumours that at New Delhi the change will not be on the Agenda. Influential persons don't think it will do good to press the issue too much. The reaction of the synodes of the great churches is not without reserve. The formulation of this reserve varies, but the essence is the same: the acceptance of the Basis may not endanger the theological pluralism, which is the tradition of the Churches. Thus the "Synode nationale" of the French church have recommended their delegates to make clear on the moment that they accept the Basis, that this acceptance is meant in the same spirit, which was present at the proclamation of the Confession of Faith in 1938. This means the formula can be accepted in Spirit and in Truth. The English Quakers will not react either positively or negatively

on this question, but continue to work in those commissions where they can be useful.

Our own witness

There will be those who will challenge this pragmatic view and doubt whether liberalism can have any impact in the WCC. On the other hand, there will be in our groups those, like the present writer, who believe that the dialogue and the work by liberals inside the WCC is necessary for the continuing contribution of liberalism to christianity. It will be well to understand each other to the full and not lend ourselves to the forces of negativism, selfsufficiency or insinuation. We need each other — liberals inside and outside the WCC — to broaden our local, national or denominational view. We need the I.A.R.F. and we must make the organization strong, if only to meet the other group, to share the problems related to our point of view and line of approach, to criticize and help each other with our insights. Last but not least: to undertake together those actions, which the WCC, with its complicated formation, cannot do, but which are possible for us.

The Davos Congress can be an example of a liberal approach to a burning problem: the Unity of Mankind. Therefore its success is so very important.

I don't think the I.A.R.F. can function in the same way for those, who are in the WCC and for those who have no other international organization than the I.A.R.F. But for both groups, I think, the I.A.R.F. is indispensable.

LIBERAL RELIGION CONFRONTS THE RACE PROBLEM IN THE SOUTH

I want to share with you my reactions as a Unitarian minister serving a liberal church in the South today. Perhaps I can convey some understanding of the atmosphere in the South and interpret some of the problems with which liberal religion is confronted. These have been significant years during which the problem of race has come to a head. These have also been years when liberal religion has been expanding rapidly throughout the Southern states. No region in the United States can show such rapid growth as far as liberal religion is concerned. We have found wherever we have been able to establish liberal churches and fellowships a response upon the part of southerners hungry for the fresh clean approach of liberal religion not only in the problem of race, but in the theological area as well. This article is based on certain assumptions which we had better state at the outset. In the first place being a liberal in the South is different from being a liberal in Boston or Chicago. I don't want to overemphasize the difference in the moral, social and political atmosphere in which we live, but nothing is served by playing it down or by distorting the picture by making believe that America is everywhere the same. We in the South have different problems from liberals in other parts of the country, not to mention the world. The second point I would underline is that these are special times — in a very real sense they are troubled times. We call our age an age of transition as if it was unique. In a sense all history is the same — wars and rumors of war, ebb and flow, change, crisis and all confusion in individual lives that traumatic change brings. For us in the South this kind of historical perspective gives us a measure of reassurance. From another point of view we note that history does not flow easily and smoothly. There are special periods when things seem to come to a head. Explosions occur, change is violent and people get hurt. Our time seems to be that kind of time. These special times in history demand of man a greater and stronger commitment to moral and spiritual purpose. They are times of sacrifice when our values go through a shakedown and

we learn the minimum with which we can survive with integrity. All that is false, inadequate and superficial is soon exposed and falls away. These special times in history are the times when heroes are made. We know, in spite of Thomas Carlyle, that heroes are made, not born. Heroes are symbols of Troubled Times when great decisions were made. The liberal needs this kind of historical perspective in order to see the forest in spite of the trees.

We have said that troubled times are the times when heroes are made. We also know that not many people are heroes in the Grand Sense. If we look at history in perspective we see that behind the great heroes are countless human beings whose commitment to value, whose courage in the face of danger and whose willingness to persist made the big decisions possible. We know that behind the great decisions of history — behind the heroes — are the countless biographies of good decent people, who lived and loved, who worked hard, who brought up children, who kept the fabric of the world together — who out of the experience of life had learned the lessons of goodness, decency, and integrity.

John Jay Chapman, in describing the atmosphere in the town of Coatsville, Pennsylvania, where a horrible lynching had taken place has this to say, "I saw something beyond all argument in the depth of its significance. You might call it the paralysis of the nerves about the heart". Many people in the South today — trying to be good, decent people, to make a little money, to have a little home — have a sort of paralysis of the nerves around the heart.

The pressures for conformity are tremendous. All around us the liberal hears different words, different values, a different morality ceaselessly reiterated until we feel brainwashed. Under these circumstances it costs a great deal to hold one's own, to make the compromises demanded of us for survival and yet to always be aware that we are compromising. Compromise is not evil in itself. It is often the best we can do. But we must know what we are doing; we must never fool ourselves. Everything we drink from a segregated water fountain, every day our children go to a segregated school, everytime we take a segregated book from a segregated library we must know it is compromise with what is good and decent.

The situation we see all around us, namely the wide discrepancy between belief and practice, between the reality of our lives and our professions of virtue may be described as a "sort of paralysis of the nerves about the heart", or as a failure of the moral nerve of the whole community. Gilbert Murray described the collapse of Greek Civilization as the "period of the loss of Greek nerve". He went on to say, "Whirl or chaos was King". This may happen in the South. There may be a complete loss of nerve across the whole area, and

chaos and confusion will reign. Evil grows when good does not oppose it. All of this is merely to describe the dilemma facing the liberal in these troubled times in the South. He must compromise to survive in the face of his knowledge that evil grows unless good opposes it. Shall we turn our attention to this dilemma.

The liberal in times of crisis needs what David Riesman describes as the "nerve of failure", the courage to accept the possibility of defeat. In a culture such as ours which values power and strength and size the weaker minorities are made to feel there is something wrong with them. This feeling of something being wrong is accompanied by a need to submit, to affirm others' affirmations. This is one explanation of why some of the worst racists are Northerners in the South who have adopted the affirmations of others.

The nerve of failure is the capacity or the courage to face aloneness without being destroyed, without having the guts tipped out of one's own value system. It is different from courage in defeat. The nerve of failure comes into play before defeat has occurred, when defeat is only a possibility. It is the nerve of failure which provides us moral protection from physical power. The Jew in the ghettos had the nerve of failure. The Negro children walking alone to school have the nerve of failure. They have the power, the deep internal power, to stand alone and to accept the possibility of defeat without being morally destroyed.

The real integrity of the individual and the liberal movement in the South today depends upon the nerve of failure — the power to persist in believing in what is decent and right even if one may fail. Liberals in the South, Negro and White, mutually committed to the same values of good human relationship, to the same principles of religion and democracy, must cultivate the nerve of failure if we, and what is more important, the values which we represent, are to survive.

The liberal religious movement in the South is growing today at an unprecedented rate because it has, in the writer's opinion, developed the capacity to persist in believing and practicing what is right, and good, and decent. This is the only antidote to the paralysis of the nerves about the heart which is characteristic of the atmosphere in which we live.

The Chinese have a word for "Crisis" which is made up of two pictures. One of the pictures is "danger". We all know that crisis involves danger. The other picture is "opportunity". These times in the South are filled with danger for liberal religion, yes, but full of opportunity for the strong of heart.

England

The Union of Modern Free Churchmen suffered a great loss in March by the death of Rev. Thomas Wigley MA (Cantab), its President. Thirty years back it was he who urged upon Congregational ministers the necessity of a restatement of Christian thought in the light of contemporary experience. As a result a number of ministers and layfolk met at Blackheath where Mr. Wigley was minister and engaged in discussions. This led to them becoming known as the Blackheath group. Their considered opinion when published aroused a great deal of interest and discussion in the religious press. Later they were joined by people belonging to other Christian communions with the result that the Blackheath group widened the basis of its membership and the Union of Modern Free Churchmen came into being to bring together liberal Christians of the different free churches.

In all this activity Mr. Wigley was the driving force and in subsequent years he wrote several books, numerous pamphlets, gave lectures, initiated discussions all aiming at a modern thoughtful and compelling presentation of the Christian faith. To the end of his days — he died suddenly while preparing for service — he took the keenest interest in the activities of the Union, represented it at the IARF Oxford Congress a few years ago, and was its liaison with the Modern Churchman's Union of the Anglican Church. At Blackheath where he was minister for more than thirty years he was much loved by his people who gained much from his scholarly discourses, wise counsel and warm friendship.

By his death Liberal Christianity in England has lost a distinguished scholar and vigorous champion of the faith.

The Union of Modern Free Churchmen held its annual meeting in April 21st at Whitefields Memorial Church, Ondon when there was an excellent attendance of members to receive the reports. These showed an increased membership, a successful programme of activities, pleasing sales of literature and a growing measure of support and interest in the quarterly journal *The Modern Free Churchman*. One of the interesting features of this meeting was an address by a young Congregational minister Rev. G. Underwood who told something of the spiritual pilgrimage which has led him in the first three years of ministerial service to move from orthodoxy to liberalism and of his conviction that the hope for the future dwelt with Liberal Christianity.

Rev. Arthur Peacock

BOOKNEWS

Dr. Heije Faber: "Pastoral Care and Clinical Training in America". Published by N.V. van Loghum Slaterus, Arnhem (Holland). 126 pages, f 3,90.

Dr. Faber, one of the IARF secretaries, spent three months in USA in 1960 to study the latest developments in the fields of pastoral psychology and psychology of religion. He was the guest of Meadville Theological School in Chicago, but also did extensive travelling, during which he collected many impressions about American church-life and clinical pastoral training. This book is a report of his research. It contains an interesting comparison between the religious situation in Europe and that in USA and gives a survey of this unique American contribution to pastoral care with some critical comments.

Hill, Dorothy B.: Abraham, his heritage and ours, Boston, the Beacon press 1957.

In this biography of the man, who stands at the beginning of three great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Moslemism, the writer combines the biblical traditions and the new findings of archeology. Old legends and the writers' imagination supplement skillfully where the story needs it. Thus a portrait of Abraham is being created in its historical setting. The book is richly illustrated and very well published by Beacon Press.

Niles, Daniël T.: "the Context in which we preach". John Knox House Association, Geneva, 1956.

Dr. Niles, the well-known representative of the young Asian churches, delivered in 1956 the second John Knox House lecture. He approaches his subject from the side of the preacher, the hearer, the life of the church, the message to the world.

Cole, Alfred Storer: "Clarence Skinner, prophet of twentieth century Universalism". Universalist Historical Society, Boston, 1956.

"The mantle of Walter Rauschenbusch had fallen on his shoulders" writes his friend and colleague Sorer, the well-known Universalist writer and preacher. The booklet is a warm tribute to the person and work of Clarence Skinner.

Thruelsen, Richard and Kobler, John: "Adventures of Mind", Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1960.

This admirable book contains 21 essays by some of those, who made this adventure. Mark van Doren, who introduces the book, writes: "The mind adventures and the mind stays at home. If this book both terrifies and reassures its readers, the reason will be that it shows man doing both of those extremely difficult, courageous things." Contributors are:

Jacques Barzun ("the misbehavioral sciences"), Paul Tillich ("the lost dimension in religion"), J. Robert Oppenheimer ("the mystery of matter"), Aldous Huxley ("drugs, that shape men's mind), Arthur M. Schlesinger ("the decline of heroes"), Edith Sitwell ("the poet's vision"), Fred Hoyle ("When time began"), Aaron Copland ("the pleasures of music"), Clement Greenberg ("the case for abstract art"), Bertrand Russell ("the expanding mental universe").

Von Loewenich, Walther: Glaube, Kirche, Theologie. Luther Verlag, Witten/Ruhr 1958.

It was a pleasure to get acquainted through this book with the work of Prof. v. Loewenich, professor in historical theology and history of christian art in Erlangen, Germany. The book, a collection of addresses and papers, deserves to be read in our IARF-circle. Extensive knowledge of trends in theology in the past and at present, enables him to follow his own way in writing about such diverse subjects as "Tasks and limits of scientific theology", "Is the Bible the Word of God", "the Future", "the Doubt", "World-Christianity", "Christianity and the modern world", and the reader is not astonished to find a critical, but positive study on "the Significance of Liberalism in today's theological situation". It is more right-wing-liberalism than left-wing-orthodoxy, if we like to characterise its theology. But why should we do that?

Peacock, Arthur: Religion can help the world. A symposion published by the World Congress of Faiths, London.

This booklet contains a number of lectures, which have been given at gatherings of the World Congress of Faiths. Representatives of the great faiths write about the spiritual and moral implication of their belief for the modern world. For the beginner there is always something unsatisfying in such a collection of essays. Those who have already studied in this field will find some stimulating thoughts.

Dr. G. H. van Senden: Het werelddrama, een beschouwing van cultuur en religie, 1954, 664 pp in 2 parts, Drukkerij Drost, 's-Gravenhage.

The author of this voluminous book is a dutch philosopher of religion who has the courage to go his own way (a matter of merit!) in his reflection on the complex relation of theology and philosophy. Already some decades ago his study on "The struggle for new values of life" (1922) was a joyful surprise amidst the various false alternatives under which the relation between theology and philosophy is usually considered in Europe.

In this new book he first introduces us to the philosophy of Hegel whereby he proves to be a respectful, but independent disciple of this famous philosopher. He also gives important and interesting expositions of problems, such as: the sense of form in different cultures, conflicts of cultures, the cosmic elements in the Northern myth, the Jewish problem, etc.

However, the culminating-point of this study lies in the way in which the learned author deals with "the problem of religion". On the one side he fights against the naively-realistic conception of religious ideas in favour of a symbolical interpretation, on the other side he shows convincingly the necessity of penetration of the philosophical idea into religion and theology.

In short: a brilliant study on the vital questions of religion and culture.

Literature on Arminius.

Jacobus Arminius, the famous Remonstrant theologian of Leyden University, was born in 1560. On the occasion of the jubilee of this date several commemorations were organised by the Dutch Remonstrants and some publications published. Among them are a biography written by a young Remonstrant minister, D. Tjalsma: "Leven en Strijd van Jacobus Arminius" (De Tijdstroom, Lochem); essay on Arminius' address on the peace in the Church by the former Remonstrant professor in Leyden, G. J. Sirks: "Arminius' Pleidooi voor de Vrede der Kerk" and as a third an attractive edition of the

declaration, which Arminius gave in a meeting of the "Staten van Holland", the representative gathering of the towns of Holland, in 1608: "Verklaring van Jacobus Arminius van 1608" with annotations by Prof. G. J. Hoenderdaal, at present Remonstrant professor of Leyden University (De Tijdstroom, Lochem).

Prof. Dr. K. A. H. Hidding: "God en Goden", (Van Gorcum, Assen).

In this essay on "essence, truth and development of the religions" the professor of the phenomenology of religion of Leyden University gives his view on the unity and diversity of the world's religions. He applies the so called "structural method", which has proved so useful in linguistic studies, to his field and shows, that what unites and distinguishes the historic religions is the difference in structure. He certainly has put before us an important working-hypothesis, which in the present religious situation in our "One world" should prove itself useful.

Prof. Dr. C. J. Bleeker: "De Moedergodin in de Oudheid" (Bert Bakker-Daamen, Den Haag, 1960).

The former secretary of the I.A.R.F. and at present professor of comparative religion at Amsterdam University, gives in this booklet an interesting survey of the mothergodness in the religions of the world. It is written for a greater public and will, with the interest of laymen for these subjects, certainly appeal to many.

Dr. H. B. Kossen: „Op zoek naar de historische Jezus" (Van Gorcum, Assen, 1960).

This book contains the thesis with which the young Mennonite minister obtained his doctor's degree at Amsterdam University. He gives under the title "Searching for the historical Jesus" a study of Albert Schweitzer's views on the life of Jesus and especially of the point in how far Schweitzer is right in his interpretation of the so called messianic secret in Jesus' life. He, in contrast to Schweitzer, defends the thesis, that Jesus, during his life already considered himself to be the Messiah, be it in a hidden way.

"Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era", compiled and edited by Kishimoto Hideo. (Obunsha, Tokyo, Japan).

Dr. Kishimoto, one of the leading men in the field of the objective studies of religion of Japan and connected with our Association, edits in this impressive volume a most interesting survey of the religious development in Japan in the time between 1868 and 1912, the period in which Emperor Meiji ruled over Japan. Espe-

cially the roles of Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity are treated extensively. A valuable aspect of this book is that the religious development is seen in the context of social and cultural change. Dr. Kishimoto has had the cooperation of some leading Japanese students of religion and has given a most interesting contribution towards an understanding of the changes in one of the important countries of the East.

Von Ungarit nach Qumran, Beiträge zur alttestamentliche und altorientalische Forschung.

Beihefte zur Zeitschr. für die alttestamentl. Wissensch. (Berlin 1958).

A number of scholars, as W. F. Albright, W. Baumgartner, J. Lindblom, J. Pedersen and H. H. Rowley contributed to a *Festschrift* for Otto Eissfeldt. The articles are in themselves interesting but have no other coherence than a way of honouring the jubilar. Contributions are made in the field of archeology, text criticism, and some special topics of religious thinking, all within the boundaries of the Old Testament and the Near East.

Die Umwelt des Neuen Testaments.

Ausgewählte Quellen von C. K. Barrett (The New Testament's Background, Selected Documents).

J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Thübingen 1959.

This book of Barrett, translated into German by C. Colpe, contains the sources which are important for the study of the New Testament: first about the Roman Emperors especially August; then some papyri and inscriptions, some extracts of philosophers, e.g. Stoics. Further sources about the mysteria, extracts from Josephus, Philo and Mishnah-tractates; and at last from the apocalyptic literature and Qumran writings. A very useful compilation. The notes and comments are not always to the point and up-to-date: The Feast of Weeks was certainly already before the beginning of our era the feast of Covenant and Revelation (P. 168). The Feast of Tabernacles was in the first place, at least before 70 A.D., a feast for Temple dedication (p. 169).

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